

ACTIVITIES BALTIMORE
SMALL PASSENGER VESSEL INDUSTRY DAY
"PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY"
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GOOD MORNING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS A PLEASURE
FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU TODAY TO SPEAK ABOUT
PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY AND THE PROGRESS THAT
WE ARE ALL MAKING TOGETHER.

MY THANKS TO ALL OF YOU, THE STAFF AT ACTIVITIES
BALTIMORE, AND CAPTAIN PEOPLES FOR GIVING ME THIS
OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT THIS
IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

HOWEVER, BEFORE I ADDRESS THIS TOPIC, I WOULD LIKE TO
MAKE A FEW REMARKS ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THE
RECENT ACTION WORKOUT PROJECT WE HELD AT THE
REGIONAL EXAM CENTER IN BALTIMORE. THE PROCESS
AGGRESSIVELY SOUGHT WAYS TO IMPROVE THE
QUALITY OF SERVICE WE PROVIDE TO OUR CUSTOMERS -
THE MARINERS.

THE AWO WORKED ON THE REDESIGN OF THE APPLICATION FORM TO MAKE IT MORE USER-FRIENDLY TO THE MARINER WHILE STILL SUPPLYING US WITH ALL OF THE INFORMATION WE NEED FOR OUR OWN ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES. WE ARE VERY CLOSE TO A REDESIGN OF THIS FORM, AND LOOK FORWARD TO PROVIDING IT TO YOU.

ALSO, THE AWO DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF ADVANCING OUR NEW COAST GUARD DATABASE OR MARINE SAFETY NETWORK, TO REPLACE THE EXISTING MERCHANT MARINER LICENSING AND DOCUMENTATION COMPUTER SYSTEM, WHICH IS IN THE FINAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT, FOR REC USE. WE FEEL THAT THIS WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE PROCESSING SPEED IN HANDLING APPLICATIONS, AND ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING INTO THIS POSSIBILITY.

FINALLY, WE ARE INVESTIGATING THE VIABILITY OF DEVELOPING AN AUTOMATED PHONE CALL FORWARDING CAPABILITY. THIS WOULD SAVE REC PERSONNEL TIME SPENT ON THE PHONE, THAT THEY COULD BETTER USE TO PROCESS AND HANDLE YOUR APPLICATIONS. THE AUTOMATED PHONE SYSTEM WOULD ENABLE MARINERS TO BE SERVICED WITH BASIC INFORMATION NEEDS AND ALSO ROUTE THEIR CALL FOR MORE TECHNICAL ADVICE TO THE APPROPRIATE REC.

THESE WERE JUST SOME OF THE MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED AT THE AWO. I WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH ALL OF THEIR EFFORTS DURING THIS PROCESS, AND FEEL THAT MANY VERY SIGNIFICANT GAINS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED TO IMPROVE THE MERCHANT MARINER LICENSING AND DOCUMENTATION PROCESS FOR ALL OF US.

NOW, I'D LIKE TO SHARE SOME THOUGHTS ON PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY WITH ALL OF YOU.

INTRODUCTION

THE CONFERENCE AGENDA TODAY COVERS QUITE A BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS THAT DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR US TO WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EACH OTHER TO ENSURE MARITIME SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT. THOSE ARE OUR COMMON CONCERNS. WE'RE ALSO SUPPOSED TO FACILITATE COMMERCIAL MARITIME OPERATIONS – HELP MAKE THEM HAPPEN WITH A BALANCE OF SAFETY AND MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER TO MITIGATE RISKS, PREPARE EACH OTHER IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT OR EMERGENCY, AND STRIVE TOWARD THE HIGHEST SAFETY LEVEL POSSIBLE.

THE WORD “PARTNERSHIP” IS KEY HERE AND WILL BE FOR THE FUTURE. I WOULD TELL YOU THAT WE'VE WORKED WELL WITH NACO OVER THE YEARS TO PURSUE SPECIAL AREAS OF INTEREST. THE MARYLAND CHARTERBOAT ASSOCIATION, SINCE IT'S NEAR WASHINGTON, HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO US-AND ED O'BRIEN HAS SERVED YOU AND NACO WELL AS A POINT OF CONTACT FOR US.

THE COAST GUARD CURRENTLY HAS NINE FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS, UNDER THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR PREVENTION THROUGH PEOPLE (PTP) PROGRAM TO CONSCIOUSLY PURSUE NON-REGULATORY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE MARITIME SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. OUR WORK WITH YOU IS LESS FORMAL BUT THE SAME PRINCIPLES APPLY.

THE PTP PRINCIPLES INCLUDE:

- HONOR THE MARINER – SEEK AND RESPECT THE OPINIONS OF THOSE THAT DO THE WORK;
- TAKE A QUALITY APPROACH – ENGAGE ALL OF US TO PURSUE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT;

- SEEK NON-REGULATORY SOLUTIONS – HIGHER LEVELS OF SAFETY ARE ACHIEVED BY COMPLEMENTING FORMAL REGULATORY APPROACHES WITH INNOVATIVE, VOLUNTARY MEASURES;
- SHARE COMMITMENT – GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY WORKING TOGETHER; AND,
- MANAGE RISK – APPLY COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS WHERE THEY DO THE MOST GOOD.

WE IN THE COAST GUARD SEE OUR PARTNERSHIPS, WHETHER FORMAL OR INFORMAL, AS TERRIBLY IMPORTANT. AND IT IS THE REASON THE COAST GUARD IS SO ACTIVE IN YOUR INDUSTRY DAY THIS YEAR.

WE BELIEVE A HIGHER LEVEL OF SAFETY IS ACHIEVED BY COMPLEMENTING FORMAL TRADITIONAL REGULATORY PROGRAMS WITH INNOVATIVE NON-REGULATORY VOLUNTARY MEASURES. YOU ARE THE EXPERTS IN YOUR INDUSTRY AND WE RECOGNIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LISTEN AND DIALOGUE WITH YOU TO UNDERSTAND YOUR VIEWS, CONCERNS AND ISSUES; AND TO MANAGE RISK – TO DEVELOP COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS WHERE THEY WILL DO THE MOST GOOD.

TODAY, I'M PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY AND THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF OUR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP...A PARTNERSHIP THAT MUST BE NURTURED WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION AND INNOVATION.

I'LL DO THAT BY FIRST EXAMINING THE SCOPE OF PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY FROM THE COAST GUARD PERSPECTIVE, THEN REVIEW SOME OF OUR SUCCESSES, CONSIDER SOME FACTORS THAT IMPACT FUTURE RISK AND FINISH WITH HOW I SEE OUR STRATEGY UNFOLDING TO DEAL WITH THE FUTURE.

FIRST, LET ME STRESS THAT THE ISSUE OF PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY WITHIN THE COAST GUARD IS NOT JUST A SAFETY ISSUE TO BE DEALT WITH BY OUR MARINE SAFETY DIRECTORATE BUT ONE THAT INVOLVES THE ENTIRE COAST GUARD ... FROM MARINE SAFETY OFFICE'S TO SEARCH AND RESCUE/OPERATIONS PERSONNEL, TO THOSE THAT MANAGE OUR WATERWAYS AND VESSEL TRAFFIC SYSTEMS. IT IS A COMBINATION OF PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS.

WE THINK A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY ISSUES HAS THE BIGGEST PAYOFF. IT'S ABOUT PREVENTING ACCIDENTS FROM HAPPENING AND BEING PREPARED TO RESPOND IF THEY DO. IT'S ALL ABOUT RISK – A COMBINATION OF THE PROBABILITY OF AN ACCIDENT VERSUS ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THIS CONCEPT HAS GREAT RELEVANCE TO PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY. THE PROBABILITY OF A PASSENGER VESSEL ACCIDENT IS, THANKFULLY VERY LOW; BUT THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES - LOSS OF PASSENGER LIVES – ARE SUBSTANTIAL. NEITHER YOU NOR WE CAN AFFORD THOSE CONSEQUENCES.

MINIMIZING THE PROBABILITY THROUGH FORMAL REGULATORY PREVENTION PROGRAMS ... AND BEING ABLE TO MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES FROM ANY PASSENGER VESSEL ACCIDENT THROUGH SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE PROGRAMS ... IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND MOST OF THE COAST GUARD HAS A PART TO PLAY.

IN A NUTSHELL, THE SAFETY OF PASSENGER VESSELS IS A CORE RESPONSIBILITY THAT PERMEATES OUR ENTIRE ORGANIZATION, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. AND I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY IS THE TOP SAFETY PRIORITY AND OF PERSONAL INTEREST TO OUR COMMANDANT, ADM JIM LOY.

TOGETHER, WE'VE ENJOYED SUCCESS. CERTAINLY, THE PRINCIPAL SUCCESS IS THE EXTREMELY LOW ACCIDENTAL DEATH RATE AMONG PASSENGERS. APPROXIMATELY 200 MILLION PASSENGERS CARRIED EACH YEAR IN RECENT YEARS AND, DISCOUNTING DIVING ACCIDENTS AND DEATHS, ONLY A FEW DEATHS HAVE RESULTED. BUT AS FEW AS THEY WERE, THEY STILL RAISED CONCERN BOTH WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATIONS AND EXTERNALLY – REMEMBER THE EL TORO AND MISS MAJESTIC.

OF COURSE, NOTHING – INCLUDING – THE PASSENGER VESSEL INDUSTRY - AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT AND WE THE COAST GUARD OPERATE REMAINS STATIC.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TRENDS THAT MAY BOTH INCREASE AND MODERATE RISK AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE:

- LARGER AND FASTER VESSELS ARE BEING BUILT;
- WATERWAYS TRAFFIC OF ALL TYPES CONTINUES TO INCREASE;
- TECHNOLOGY LETS US OPERATE IN NARROWER WEATHER WINDOWS;
- PASSENGER “ADVENTURE” VESSELS ARE OPERATING IN MORE REMOTE AREAS AND EXTREME CLIMATES FURTHER FROM ASSISTANCE;
- EVER INCREASING PUBLIC RIDERSHIP, THEIR DEMANDS FOR INCREASED QUALITY OF SERVICE; AND
- GENERALLY, THE PUBLIC’S ZERO TOLERANCE OF ACCIDENTS.

THIS “FUTURE”, IN MANY RESPECTS IS NOW. TODAY, MANY OF YOU CARRY A LARGE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS, PERHAPS EVEN LARGE ENOUGH TO OVERWHELM OUR IMMEDIATE SEARCH AND RESCUE CAPABILITIES. IN ADDITION, YOU DO OPERATE IN SEASONALLY COLD WATER ENVIRONMENTS WHERE THERE IS MINIMAL RESPONSE TIME IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY. OR, YOU MAY EVEN OPERATE AT THE EXTREME EDGES OF OUR SEARCH AND RESCUE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY. WE ARE WEIGHING ALL OF THESE RISKS, AND WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE ON YOUR SCOPE AS WELL.

THERE WAS A RECENT CASE WHERE A FERRY WITH OVER 200 PASSENGERS ON BOARD GROUNDED IN ICE COVERED WATERS. THE ICE AND SHALLOW WATER LIMITED RESPONSE BY COAST GUARD SEARCH AND RESCUE SURFACE UNITS IN THE AREA. EVENTUALLY, A PLAN WAS WORKED OUT TO EVACUATE THE PASSENGERS BY AIRCRAFT, IF NECESSARY. THANKFULLY, THE VESSEL WAS RE-FLOATED WITH NO DAMAGE AND PASSENGER EVACUATION WAS NOT NEEDED.

THE POINT THOUGH, IS THAT THE SCENARIO WAS NEVER FULLY CONSIDERED; AND, ALTHOUGH A PLAN WAS DEVELOPED IN A CRISIS RESPONSE FASHION, IT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE FALLEN SHORT IF NEAR TERM MASS PASSENGER EVACUATION WAS REQUIRED.

A SYSTEMATIC, METHODICAL RISK ASSESSMENT OF OPERATIONS IN THAT AREA MAY HAVE REVEALED THE PROSPECT AND RESULTED IN A CONTINGENCY PLAN BEFORE THE EVENT OR SOME OTHER MITIGATING EFFORT.

OUR GOAL IN THE PAST AND FOR THE FUTURE IS VERY SIMPLE
– NO PASSENGER DEATHS! I REALIZE THAT IS YOUR SAFETY GOAL AS WELL.

HISTORICALLY, WE'VE ADDRESSED PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY THROUGH FORMAL SAFETY REGULATORY REGIMES AND HAVE BUILT UP A SET OF REGULATIONS THAT ALL OF YOU ARE VERY FAMILIAR WITH. AND, THAT REGULATORY REGIME HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL ALONG WITH YOUR EFFORTS AS PARTNERS IN SAFETY IN MINIMIZING PASSENGER LOSS OF LIFE.

ADM LOY LIKES TO SAY THAT THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT HAVE GOTTEN US WHERE WE ARE MARINE SAFETY: LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION AND COOPERATION. IT IS WHERE THOSE CHARACTERISTICS ARE SHARED BY THOSE MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY THAT WE HAVE MADE THE MOST PROGRESS ... HAS THE BEST RECORD.

AND, GIVEN TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY IN THE FUTURE, LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION AND COOPERATION WILL BE REQUIRED IN EVEN LARGER DOSES IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE OUR VERY FINE SAFETY PERFORMANCE.

TOGETHER, WE MUST UNDERSTAND OUR COLLECTIVE SAFETY
FUTURE AND TAKE THE LEAD IN DEVELOPING
INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PRESSING AND
PROSPECTIVE PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY ISSUES THAT
THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR US.

WELL, WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY?

FIRST AND FOREMOST, BECAUSE OUR ENVIRONMENT IS
CONSTANTLY CHANGING, WE MUST BE PROACTIVE AND
CHANGE WITH IT. AS LEADERS WE MUST RECOGNIZE
THAT. A LEADER IS ONE WHO SEES THINGS SOONER, AND
REACTS FASTER THAN OTHERS DO AND RECOGNIZES
THAT WHAT WORKED IN THE PAST MAY NOT
EXTRAPOLATE WELL INTO THE FUTURE; AND,
RECOGNIZES THAT “COOPERATIVE INNOVATION” IS KEY
TO FUTURE SUCCESS.

OUR STRATEGY ALSO INVOLVES A COMBINATION OF THE
PRINCIPLES OF PTP THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER AND
THAT HAVE WOUND THROUGH MY REMARKS THUS FAR.

VERY BROADLY, IT INCLUDES, THROUGH PARTNERSHIP,
SEEKING AND RESPECTING YOUR OPINIONS; SHARING
OUR MUTUAL COMMITMENT TOWARD WORKING FOR
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF SAFETY; AND,
EMPLOYING NON-REGULATORY SOLUTIONS, WHERE
POSSIBLE, THROUGH RISK ASSESSMENT AND
MANAGEMENT BEFORE AN ACCIDENT OCCURS ... A PRO-
ACTIVE APPROACH DESIGNED TO BE OUT IN FRONT OF
PROSPECTIVE RISKS.

OUR STRATEGY IS A MORE PROACTIVE APPROACH THAN OUR
TRADITIONAL REGULATORY EFFORTS THAT WERE OFTEN
REACTIVELY BASED ON CASUALTIES. IRONICALLY, OUR
SUCCESS GIVES US LITTLE CASUALTY DATA WITH WHICH
TO CONSIDER FUTURE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS TO
CONTINUE TO MINIMIZE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A CASUALTY
BUT THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN ACCIDENT
CHALLENGE US TO DO MORE AND DEMAND THAT WE DO
MORE.

WE BELIEVE THAT RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MITIGATION ARE AMONG THE TOOLS THAT WE SHOULD PURSUE AND LEARN TO EMPLOY TOGETHER TO ENSURE CONTINUING SAFETY AND FURTHER REDUCTION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF CASUALTIES. POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF THIS APPROACH WILL HELP US FINE TUNE OUR PREVENTION EFFORTS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HELP US ASSESS WHETHER OUR COAST GUARD RESPONSE POSTURE ... OUR ABILITY TO ASSIST IN TIME OF CRISIS IS SUFFICIENT FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE LEVELS OF PASSENGER VESSEL INDUSTRY OPERATIONS.

RISK ASSESSMENT IS NOT NEW; HOWEVER, PROACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT RATHER THAN REACTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT IS A DIFFERENT APPROACH. SO, WHILE WE ARE NOT BREAKING ENTIRELY NEW GROUND HERE, WE ARE ALL GOING THROUGH A LEARNING PROCESS.

RISK MANAGEMENT IS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE. THE PURPOSE OF RISK ASSESSMENTS, AND THE RESULTING RISK MANAGEMENT, IS SIMPLY TO GIVE US MORE AND BETTER INFORMATION ABOUT SAFETY.

OFTEN, RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT AND
CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT ARE BEST DONE AT THE
LOCAL LEVEL WITH OUR MARINE SAFETY OFFICES WHO
DO THE PREVENTION WORK AND WITH OUR GROUP
OFFICES THAT PROVIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE
SERVICES WORKING WITH THE INDUSTRY TO IDENTIFY
POTENTIAL AREAS OF RISK. THIS APPROACH ADDRESSES
OUR ABILITY TO PREVENT A PROBLEM FROM
DEVELOPING AND OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND IF IT DOES.

IF WE ARE LACKING IN OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND, THEN WE
NEED TO FILL THE GAPS IDENTIFIED OR CONSIDER OTHER
PREVENTION MEASURES.

IN SUMMARY, PARTNERSHIP, WHETHER FORMAL OR
INFORMAL, AND FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF PTP ARE
THE KEYS TO SUCCESS IN PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY ...
IN REACHING TOWARD OUR MUTUAL GOAL OF NO
PASSENGER DEATHS AND ANTICIPATING AND PREPARING
FOR FUTURE SAFETY TRENDS.

WE HAVE ENJOYED COLLECTIVE SUCCESS TOGETHER TO
WHERE THE PASSENGER VESSEL INDUSTRY ENJOYS A
SUPERB SAFETY RECORD. HOWEVER, FUTURE TRENDS
WILL CREATE EVER NEW CHALLENGES TO TEST OUR
METTLE.

OUR JOINT LEADERSHIP POSITION DEMANDS COOPERATIVE,
INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE
SAFETY. WE BELIEVE THAT PROACTIVE RISK
ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT IS A MEANS, AMONG
OTHERS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM.

THAT APPROACH IS BEST DONE IN PARTNERSHIP WHERE WE
CAN LEARN AND REFINE THE PROCESS TOGETHER AND
ADDRESS CONCERNS THAT MIGHT DEVELOP AND CREATE
TRUST IN THE PROCESS.

THE COAST GUARD IS COMMITTED TO THE CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT OF PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY, OUR
NUMBER ONE MARITIME SAFETY PRIORITY, AND IS
COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH YOU IN PURSUING
SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AND OUR SHARED GOAL.

ONCE AGAIN THANK-YOU FOR YOUR TRUST, CONFIDENCE, AND
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS IN FURTHERING THE SAFETY
INTERESTS IN OUR NATION'S WATERWAYS. I HOPE YOU
HAVE A MOST PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRY DAY. WE IN THE
COAST GUARD SALUTE YOUR GOOD WORKS!